

Message Text

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ACTION IO-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 1799

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PR, UN, BU

SUBJECT: PUERTO RICO IN COMMITTEE OF 24

REF: A) STATE 198365; B) STATE 194115; C) USUN 1208;

D) PRAGUE 2077

1. A FEW THOUGHTS ON HOW WE MIGHT USE THE TIME BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE OF 24 TO BEST ADVANTAGE IN PROMOTING ACCEPTANCE OF OUR POSITION ON PUERTO RICO. WHILE BULGARIA IS NOT THE BEST EXAMPLE, IT IS HELPFUL TO ASSUME THAT AT LEAST SOME PEOPLE EVEN HERE WILL WISH TO REVIEW THE ISSUE ALSO ON ITS MERITS. WE ARE IN A BETTER POSITION IF WE CAN MAKE OUR CASE NOT ONLY ON GROUNDS OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS, I.E. IN TERMS OF THE RESENTMENT WE FEEL WHEN PUERTO RICO IS TREATED AS A CASE OF SELF-DETERMINATION DENIED, BUT ALSO IN OBJECTIVE TERMS, BY EXPLAINING MUCH MORE ABOUT THE REAL SITUATION IN PUERTO RICO.

2. IN THE LATTER SENSE THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN REF B, WHILE HELPFUL FOR IMMEDIATE PURPOSES, WAS INADEQUATE FOR LONGER-TERM MISSIONARY WORK. IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT THE CUBANS ARE FLOODING THE BULGARIANS (AS OTHERS) WITH "EVIDENCE" OF AMERICAN REPRESSION OF PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENTISAS AND THAT THE BULGARIANS ARE FAMILIAR

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WITH THE LONG ALLEGED BILL OF PARTICULARS THAT THE

CUBANS HAVE BUILT UP IN THE UN OVER A NUMBER OF YEARS. WHAT WE NEED IS COPIOUS DOCUMENTATION THAT WILL LOOK EQUALLY IMPRESSIVE AND THAT WILL ALSO REFUTE IN MUCH MORE DETAIL SOME OF THE CLAIMS BY OUR OPPONENTS.

3. ABOUT THREE OR FOUR MONTHS AGO, ON THE BASIS OF REF C, I HAD A CONVERSATION ABOUT PUERTO RICO WITH AMBASSADOR AVRAMOV, HEAD OF MFA EIGHTH DEPARTMENT WHICH HANDLES ALL AMERICAN AFFAIRS, I.E. RELATIONS WITH BOTH THE U.S. AND CUBA. PURPOSE WAS TO WARN HIM THAT THIS ISSUE COULD NEEDLESSLY ENVENOM RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES. HIS REACTION WHEN I SAID THAT THE REAL ISSUE IN PUERTO RICO IS NOT BETWEEN COMMONWEALTH STATUS AND INDEPENDENCE, BUT BETWEEN COMMONWEALTH STATUS AND STATEHOOD, SEEMED ONE OF GENUINE DISBELIEF. HOW COULD ANYONE NOT WISH TO BE INDEPENDENT UNLESS PREVENTED BY A BIG POWER? AVRAMOV READS SPANISH FLUENTLY BUT KNOWS NO ENGLISH. HE HAS BEEN IN CUBA FREQUENTLY BUT ONLY ONCE IN THE U.S., AND OF COURSE NEVER IN PUERTO RICO.

4. IF WE WANT TO DO A REAL JOB OF PERSUASION ON PUERTO RICO, NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF HOW ANGRY WE WILL BE IF GOVERNMENTS VOTE AGAINST US ON THAT ISSUE BUT -- AND IN THE LONG TERM MORE IMPORTANTLY -- IN TERMS OF HOW RIGHT WE ARE AND HOW WRONG THE CUBANS, WE WILL HAVE TO PROVIDE A GREAT DEAL OF DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPLEMENT THE DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS WE HAVE MADE SO FAR. THIS IS MORE A GENERAL SUGGESTION (IT IS ONE I HAVE MADE BEFORE WHILE IN THE DEPARTMENT) THAN KEYED TO BULGARIA. I AM CERTAINLY NOT SUGGESTING THAT THE BULGARIANS WILL STOP VOTING WITH THE USSR ON THIS ISSUE WHEN THEY HAVE SEEN THE LIGHT; BUT AS REVEALED BY REF D THERE ARE PERIODIC DISCUSSION OF UN ISSUES AMONG ALL THE EASTERN COUNTRIES, AND THOSE DISCUSSIONS CAN ONLY PROFIT FROM A GREATER EXPOSURE TO THE FACTS.

5. WE HAVE AN EXCELLENT CASE ON PUERTO RICO, BUT IT IS NOT EXHAUSTED BY SAYING "THE PUERTO RICANS HAVE DECIDED THIS ISSUE IN 1952 AND REAFFIRMED THEIR DECISION SUBSEQUENTLY, SO THIS IS A NON-ISSUE, IT IS INTERFER-
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ENCE IN OUR INTERNAL AFFAIRS, AND WE WILL MAKE YOU PAY IF YOU VOTE AGAINST US." THAT IS A GOOD BEGINNING. IN LIGHT OF THE PROPAGANDA OVER THE YEARS OF OUR OPPONENTS, WE SIMPLY CANNOT ASSUME THAT OUR SHARP RESPONSE WILL WAKE UP COUNTRIES INCLINED TO VOTE WITH CUBA. THEY HAVE BEEN AWAKE ALL ALONG, AND LISTENING TO THE CUBANS.

6. ONE OF THE DIFFICULTIES IN DEALING WITH THIS ISSUE HAS BEEN THAT, AT LEAST WHEN I WAS IN IO, NOBODY IN THE DEPARTMENT WAS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR IT. DESPITE OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR PUERTO RICO'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS, THERE WAS NO TRUE FOCUS OF EXPERTISE BECAUSE PUERTO RICO IS NOT A FOREIGN COUNTRY. BUT ACTION RESPONSIBILITY FOR COUNTER-PROPAGANDA CANNOT BE LODGED SOLELY WITH THE PUERTO RICANS, NO MATTER HOW EXCELLENTLY THEY GOVERN THEMSELVES. IT IS THE UNITED STATES THAT IS BEING ATTACKED, AND THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SHOULD START BY RECOGNIZING THAT IT HAS A DIFFICULT DIPLOMATIC AND PROPAGANDA PROBLEM.

7. THERE MAY BE A TENDENCY TO CLAIM THAT IF WE ARGUE AT LENGTH ABOUT THE PUERTO RICAN ISSUE WE DIGNIFY THE CASE OF OUR OPPONENTS. BETTER TO CUT OFF DEBATE BY CLAIMING THAT PR IS A NON-ISSUE. BUT WE CANNOT CUT OFF THE DEBATE, WE CAN ONLY MAKE IT ONE-SIDED BY SAYING LITTLE. FURTHER, REFUSING TO ARGUE OUR CASE WOULD PLACE US, IN THE EYES OF SOME, ON THE SAME BASIS AS THE USSR WHEN IT TRIES TO SAY THAT THE ISSUE OF THE BALTIC STATES HAS BEEN SETTLED AND MUST NOT BE DISCUSSED. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AND THE USSR IS THAT WE ARE NOT ASHAMED TO LET THE TRUE FACTS BE KNOWN. WE WOULD CERTAINLY NOT BE DIGNIFYING OUR OPPONENTS BY PROVING HOW MENDACIOUS THEY ARE. THE FACT THAT THEY ARE LYING ABOUT PR IS NOT AS SELF-EVIDENT TO OTHERS AS IT IS TO US.
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